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Concert: Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

Stephen Peterson

Kevin Ryan

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ITHACA COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

ITHACA COLLEGE WIND ENSEMBLE

Stephen Peterson, conductor
Kevin Ryan, graduate conductor

Dianne Birr, piano
Conrad Alexander, timpani

Ford Hall
Monday, February 23, 2009
8:15 p.m.

ITHACA

PROGRAM

Shortcut Home (1998)

Dana Wilson
(b. 1946)

3'

Five Bagatelles (1971)

Alexander Tcherepnin
(1899-1977)

6'

Allegro marziale

Vivo

Dolce

Allegro Marcia

Presto

Kevin Ryan, graduate conductor

Passacaglia, Homage on B-A-C-H (1993)

Ron Nelson
(b. 1929)

18'

INTERMISSION

Oiseaux Exotiques (1956)

Oliver Messiaen
(1908-1992)

15'

Diane Birr, piano

Colonial Song (1911)

Percy Aldridge Grainger
(1882-1961)

6'

Raise the Roof (2007)

Michael Daugherty
(b. 1954)

13'

Conrad Alexander, timpani

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Program Notes

Dana Wilson (b. 1946) is an accomplished composer with a background as a jazz pianist. He has a doctorate from the Eastman School of music. Wilson serves as the Charles A. Dana Professor of Music at Ithaca College. He was awarded the ABA/Ostwald Prize (1988) and the Sudler International Wind Band Composition Prize (1987) for his work, *Piece of Mind*.

Dana Wilson brings the jazz influence to much of his music which can be heard in his harmonies, complex rhythms, and angular melodies. The works of Wilson have been commissioned and performed by such diverse ensembles as the Chicago Chamber Musicians, Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings, Buffalo Philharmonic, Syracuse Symphony, and Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra.

Shortcut Home was commissioned by the Hillborough (NJ) High School Band, and premiered in 1998. The composer describes the piece as "a rousing and rather elaborate fanfare that features each section of the ensemble. Drawing upon various jazz styles, the music proclaims and cascades, always driving towards the 'home' of the final, C major chord."

Alexander Tcherepnin was born in Saint Petersburg, Russia, in 1899. His father, Nikolai Tcherepnin, was a student of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. Alexander Tcherepnin began his musical studies on piano at an early age and he was encouraged to compose as a young boy by his father Tcherepnin entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory and studied composition with Nikolay Alexandrovich Sokolov. Due to the politically hostile environment, however, the Tcherepnins were forced to leave Russia permanently in 1921 and settled in Paris. It was in Paris where Alexander began to launch a successful career as a pianist and composer. Tcherepnin visited East Asia between 1934 and 1937 and became a champion of composers in Japan and China. During World War II, the composer remained in France and was thus unable to devote significant time to composing. In 1948, Tcherepnin traveled to the United States where he eventually settled in Chicago in 1950. Both he and his wife, Chinese pianist Lee Ming, taught at DePaul University. During this time, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra performed several of his works, including the premiere of the composer's second symphony. In 1964, Tcherepnin moved to New York and he spent the rest of his life traveling between the United States and Europe before his death in 1977.

The music of Alexander Tcherepnin is seen as decidedly old fashioned by current Russian standards. However, during his own time, Tcherepnin's music was considered innovative and contained a distinctive harmonic language that combined major and minor

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hexachords, pentatonic scales, old Russian modal tunes, and Georgian harmonies. The composer wrote a substantial amount of solo piano music, which includes numerous bagatelles. *Five Bagatelles* is an arrangement for wind band by William E. Rhoads of five short bagatelles selected from a collection entitled *Ten Bagatelles, Op. 5 for piano*. The five bagatelles chosen by Rhoads for this arrangement vary greatly in mood, style, and texture, and showcase Tcherepnin's distinctive harmonic language. Like the original piano pieces, *Five Bagatelles* is quite succinct and last approximately six minutes.

Ron Nelson (b. 1929), a native of Joliet, Illinois, received the Bachelor of Music degree, the Master's degree, and the Doctor of Music Arts degree from the Eastman School of Music. He studied in France at the Ecole Normale de Musique and the Paris Conservatory under a Fulbright Grant in 1955. Dr. Nelson joined the Brown University faculty the following year, and became full professor in 1968. He served as chairman of the Department of Music from 1963 to 1973, and was named professor emeritus in 1993. In 1991 he was awarded the Acuff Chair of Excellence in the Creative Arts—the first musician to hold the chair. He has gained wide recognition as a composer of choral, band, and orchestral works.

Dr. Nelson has received commissions from the Rochester Philharmonic, the United States Air Force Band and Chorus, the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra, and numerous choral organizations, colleges and universities, including the University of Minnesota, Dartmouth, Western Michigan and Lawrence, as well as the Classic Chorale Brevard Music Center and Aspen Music Festival. He has also received grants and awards from the Howard Foundation, ASCAP, Brown University, and several from the National Endowment for the Arts. Dr. Nelson is the distinguished winner of the 1993 ABA/Ostwald, the NBA Composition Contest, and the Sudler International Wind Band Composition Competition, for his work *Passacaglia (Homage on B-A-C-H)*.

Passacaglia (Homage on B-A-C-H) is a set of continuous variations in moderately slow triple meter built on an eight-measure melody (basso ostinato) which is stated, in various registers, twenty-five times. It is a seamless series of tableaux which move from darkness to light.

Written in homage to J.S. Bach, it utilizes, as counterpoint throughout, the melodic motive represented by his name in German nomenclature, i.e. B-flat, A, C, and B-natural. Bach introduced this motive in his unfinished *Art of Fugue*, the textures of which are paraphrased (in and octatonic scale) in the fourth and fifth variations. The seventh variation incorporates Gustave Nottebohm's resolution (altered) of the unfinished final fugue of *The Art of Fugue*.

The famous melody from Bach's *Passacaglia in C Minor* appears once (also altered) in variation nineteen.

Oliver Messiaen (1908-1992), a significant composer of the 20th century, was influenced by various cultures. He found inspiration in his religious faith, and in the songs of birds. During the 1950s the French composer focused on birdsong as the primary source for musical material. According to Messiaen, it was his teacher Paul Dukas who told him, "Listen to the birds; they are great masters."

Oiseaux Exotiques (Exotic Birds) for piano and small orchestra was commissioned by Pierre Boulez and premiered in Paris in March of 1956. This continuous single-movement work is a sound fantasy that explores different timbres and rhythms. The composition is a mixture of birdsongs and Balinese rhythms.

Messiaen derived nearly all the birdsongs in *Oiseaux Exotiques* from recordings. The work features an array of over forty bird songs from around the world. The sounds that Messiaen included of North American birds were transcribed from a set of records released under the title *American Bird Songs*. This set of six 78 rpm records was recorded at the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University.

Percy Aldridge Grainger (1882-1961) was an Australian-American pianist, composer, and folk-song collector. He was taught by his mother, Rose, at a young age to have an appreciation for the arts. Grainger studied at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, Germany from 1895 to 1901. He then moved his base to London to establish a career as a teacher and concert pianist. He did not begin to establish his composing career until 1911 when Schott began to publish his works. With the start of the war, Grainger moved to the United States where his status quickly grew as a pianist and composer. In the 1930s he assumed the role of educator and taught at New York University. His frequent work with bands culminated in his setting of *Lincolnshire Posy* (1937), a work which he described as a "bunch of musical wildflowers."

Colonial Song was composed as a Yule-gift for his mother in 1911. In Grainger's own words: "No traditional tunes of any kind are made use of in this piece, in which I have wished to express feelings aroused by thoughts of the scenery and people of my native land (Australia)."

"Perhaps it is not unnatural that people living more or less lonely in vast virgin countries and struggling against natural and climatic hardships (rather than against the more actively and dramatically exciting counter wills of the fellow men, as in more thickly populated lands) should run largely to that patiently yearning, inactive sentimental wistfulness that we find so touchingly expressed

in much American art; for instance in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, and in Stephen C. Foster's adorable songs *My Old Kentucky Home*, *Old Folks at Home*, etc."

"I have also noticed curious, almost Italian-like musical tendencies in brass band performances and ways of singing in Australia (such as a preference for richness, intensity of tone, and soulful breadth of phrasing over more subtly and sensitively varied delicacies of expression), which are also reflected here."

Michael Daugherty (b. 1954) is one of the most colorful and widely performed American composers on the concert music scene today. Daugherty first came to international attention in the 1990s with his *Metropolis Symphony*, a symphony inspired by the comic book character, Superman. His music is infused with America's popular culture, jazz style, intricate percussion, and a unique blend of complex rhythms and harmonies. He currently is Professor of Composition at the University of Michigan.

Raise the Roof for Timpani and Symphonic Band was commissioned by the University of Michigan Symphony Band, and premiered in March of 2007. The composition is inspired by the construction of grand architectural wonders, such as the Notre Dame Cathedral (1345) and the Empire State Building (1931). Daugherty incorporates a wide variety of timpani performance techniques, including: extensive use of foot pedals, placement of a cymbal upside down on the timpani head, and the use of regular mallets, wire brushes, maraca sticks, and bare hands.

Raise the Roof is in the form of a double variation. The first of the two prominent themes is initially performed by the tuba, and is later presented in various timbral and rhythmic guises such as "guaguanco." The second theme is introduced by the flute before receiving treatment by the timpani; this theme is reminiscent of a medieval plainchant. The two themes are passed around in canons, fugues, and other permutations throughout the ensemble to create elaborate patterns, as in a gothic cathedral. *Raise the Roof* rises toward a crescendo of urban polyrhythms and dynamic contrasts.

Conrad Alexander is currently on the percussion faculty at Ithaca College, Mansfield University and the Brevard Music Center. He has taught at Ithaca College for eight years. His teaching experience includes positions at Interlochen Center for the Arts, James Madison University, The University of Virginia, The Odessa/Midland (TX) school system and Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp.

He is a member of the Binghamton Philharmonic, the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra and the Ensemble X New Music Ensemble. He has performed with the New York City Opera Touring Orchestra, the

Albany and Harrisburg (PA) Symphonies, as well as the Dallas, Richmond (VA), Greensboro (NC), Knoxville (TN), Oklahoma, and Anchorage Symphonies. In addition to performing and teaching, he is the owner of DAY Percussion Repair, specializing in all facets of percussion instrument repair and unique wooden percussion products. He has recorded for the Sony, Centaur, AmCam, and ProArtes recording labels.

Conrad earned the M.M. degree and performer's certificate from the Eastman School of Music, and the B.M. degree from Southern Methodist University. His major teachers include John Beck, Doug Howard, Kalman Cherry, John Bannon, Don Liuzzi and Charles Owen.

In 2007, Conrad became an honorary member of Kappa Kappa Psi and received Mansfield University's Bertram Francis Award from Kappa Kappa Psi for outstanding contributions to the MU Band program. He resides in Ithaca, New York with his wife, Paige Morgan, and their dogs.

Diane Birr, associate professor of piano, has taught at the college since 1993. She has collaborated with numerous vocalists and instrumentalists in recitals and master classes throughout the United States, and in Australia, Canada, France, Scotland, Austria, and Norway. She also has frequently been featured as a pianist on the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra's *Chamber Music Series* and in concerts at Ithaca College.

Dr. Birr has served as an official accompanist for the Music Teachers National Association's (MTNA) national competitions, the International Double Reed Society Conference, the International Horn Society as well as the International Trombone Association's conferences. For sixteen years Birr served on the faculty of ***International Workshops***, a two-week music and arts festival held in locations around the world, where she performed in recitals and master classes and coached chamber music. She is a member of the TroICa trio with IC colleagues Kim Dunnick (trumpet) and Steven Mauk (saxophone). The group will soon be releasing its first recording featuring works by Lawrence, Rivier, Bronner, Podgaitis and Satterwhite.

In addition, TroICa has been invited to perform at the 2010 International Trumpet Guild Conference in Sydney, Australia. Birr is active in the Music Teachers National Association, in which she currently serves as MTNA Eastern Division Director-elect. She formerly taught at the University of Northern Iowa. Her D.M.A. degree in Piano Accompanying and Chamber Music is from the Eastman School of Music.

ITHACA COLLEGE WIND ENSEMBLE

Stephen Peterson, conductor

Piccolo

Emily Wespiser

Flute

Amelia Baran
Jacquie Christian
Rebecca Copek
Aimée Shorten*
Emily Wespiser

Oboe

Jamie Davis*
Justine Popik
Alana Rosen

Bassoon

Jillian Bushnell*
Meghan Kininger
Jessica Tortorici

E♭ Clarinet

Vanessa Calaban

B♭ Clarinet

Marcus Christian*
Brianne Remaley
Laurel Stinson
Amanda Strickland
Daniel Vesey
Mark Wolocki

Bass Clarinet

Brendon Lucas

Alto Saxophone

Gabe Fadale
Ryan Salisbury*

Tenor Saxophone

Ian Cruz
Seval Kanik

Baritone Saxophone

Rachel Perry

Trumpet

Michael Banewicz
Brian Binder
James Covington
Chris Tolbert
Ethan Urtz*
Emily Waltz

Horn

Laura Francese
Tyler Ogilvie
Ella Nace
Lori Roy*
Elizabeth Teucke

Trombone

Andrew Bennett
Ryan Kuehhas
Mark Neville*

Bass Trombone

D. Phillip Truex

Euphonium

Justin Falvo*
Mike Horsford

Tuba

Kevin Madden
Dan Troiano*

Double Bass

Kevin Gobetz

Piano

Dianne Birr
Nathan Gulla

Percussion

Andrew Boynton*
Daniel Cathey
Colleen Clark
Peter Kieler
Marco Schirripa

Timpani

Emily Ickes

Graduate Assistant

Timothy Arnold
Susan DeVore

* Denotes Principal